DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 419 066 UD 032 314

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TITLE	Quantifying the Components of School Community. Publication Series No. 8.
INSTITUTION	Mid-Atlantic Lab. for Student Success, Philadelphia, PA.; National Research Center on Education in the Inner Cities, Philadelphia, PA.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	L97-8
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	19p.; Reprint from "The School Community Journal," v6 n2 p131-47 1996.
AVAILABLE FROM	Electronic version: http://www.temple.edu/LSS
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; *Community Development; *Educational Environment; Elementary Education; Learning; Parent Attitudes; *Parent Participation; *Principals; *School Culture; Tables (Data); *Values

ABSTRACT

This study began as an attempt to establish a baseline to evaluate a project to build school community. A School Community Survey was administered to parents and teachers in seven demonstration schools (six elementary and one middle school), and the principals of these schools completed a needs assessment. A total of 168 teachers and 945 parents completed the survey. Survey results show that most parents (86%) attend the open house and 76% attend the parent-teacher conferences. The reasons for analyzing data gathered from parents, teachers, and school principals were threefold: to provide each school a data-based way to proceed, information for building a stronger school community and forassessing its progress, to establish a baseline for evaluation of a project of the Laboratory for Student Success, and to begin the compilation of a data base that will eventually yield normative standards that will serve as indicators for schools in such previously subjective areas of school improvement as parental involvement, the curriculum of the home, and the strength and focus of a school community. About one-third of parents report involvement in some school activity, but the level of involvement drops with middle school. Parent responses indicate that about half of the students benefit from a curriculum of the home. Results show many differences in the perceptions of parents and teachers about school issues. The School Community Index as developed is a crude first attempt at measuring aspects of school community, including shared educational values, formation of social capital, and the curriculum of the home. With further research, it can lead to a better understanding of school community and ways to measure it. (Contains eight tables and three references.) (SLD)

Laboratory for Student Success

ED 419 066

Quantifying the Components of School Community

by
Sam Redding

1997
Publication Series No. 8

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Center for Research in Human Development and Education

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Redding, Sam. *The School Community Journal* (Vol. 6, No. 2) pp. 131-147. Copyright ©1996 by Center for the School Community. Reprinted by Permission of Center for the School Community.

The research reported herein was supported in part by the Office of the Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education through a contract to the Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success (LSS) established at the Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education (CRHDE), and in part by CRHDE. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the position of the supporting agencies, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational Values

The concept of community is as old as Aristotle. It is variously defined, given great homage, and vaguely understood. When applied to education, as in "learning community," it falls like a soothing buffer to round the sharp edges of an otherwise prickly enterprise. But a school community is more than warm feelings at the PTO wiener roast or classrooms where everyone just gets along. A school community is bound by a collective sense of the school's central purpose—academic and social learning. All communities are value-based, and school communities, by virtue of their institutional purpose, are based on educational values. As we explore how people associated with a school articulate and pursue their shared educational values, we begin to probe the meaning of school community. When Thomas Sergiovanni writes that community is "the tie that binds students and teachers together in special ways, to something more significant than themselves: shared values and ideals" (xiii), we must know that the core values are rooted in academic and social learning.

In a private school, where every student arrives by choice, it is easy to comprehend a shared set of educational values. The school officials post their values on the schoolhouse door, and students who share them may enter. But in public schools, students arrive at the insistence of a district map; they are assigned to a school. So how do shared educational values come into play in a public school? Quite simply, those who find themselves attached to a school sort out the values among themselves, and in the process community begins to emerge. Not all schools engage in this process; not all schools function as communities. Hammering out core values is not so onerous a task as might be imagined. It is not necessary that everyone agree on everything; it is only essential that they agree on some things. Do parents and teachers want their children and students to become self-directed learners, to enjoy reading, to treat others with respect, and to act responsibly? These are a few educational values around which a school community might form.

Social Capital

Shared educational values are necessary but insufficient to the formation of a school community. Sergiovanni suggests another important element of community when he draws a contrast between communities and organizations. "Communities," he says, "are socially organized around relationships and the felt interdependencies that nurture them. Instead of being tied together and tied to purposes by bartering arrangements, this social structure bonds people together in a oneness and binds them to an idea structure" (4). In Sergiovanni's view, the relationships in a community rely on commitment,

obligations, and duties, freely chosen, while relationships in an organization depend upon hierarchies, rules, and external controls.

Social capital is an asset found in the connections and support of human relationships (Coleman). As people affiliated with a school place expectations on one another, accept the obligation to meet other people's expectations, and commit themselves to an interdependency in pursuit of the common purpose of children's learning, social capital is generated and the school assumes attributes of a community. Social capital is an asset available to students; it is a reservoir of good-will, pledged assistance, wherewithal, guidance and support that their teachers, parents, and peers hold for them.

The decline in social capital accounts for much of what we sense as a "loss of community": fewer parents now reside in the households of their children; more parents work outside the home; a more mobile society separates children from caring adults (such as relatives and family friends); parents are less likely to associate with the parents of their children's schoolmates. While these societal factors have militated against the formation of social capital, schools have themselves become larger, more bureaucratized, more "organized," and less conducive to social capital. Teachers see the results in children's inability to concentrate, asocial behavior, and lack of a drive for achievement. To parents, their children's schools are not organically embedded in the neighborhood, but operate as part of a remote and rigid system.

Curriculum of the Home

A school community includes the families of students, people who impact heavily upon the students' academic and social learning and have a great stake in the outcomes. Community extends to the relationships between parents and children. Behaviors associated with a "curriculum of the home" are commonly correlated with children's success in school (Walberg), therefore a school community has a vested interest in extending the curriculum of the home to all its families, thereby increasing the productivity of the school and the academic attainment of its students.

School Community

A school community is a group of people—including teachers, school staff, students, and families of students—who are intimately attached to a specific school, share common educational values about the academic and social learning of its students, and communicate and associate with one another in furtherance of their shared educational values. In the field of education, where nearly everything is measured, terms like "school community" and "learning community" pass with nary a stab at

quantification. Not that the ideal of community is insignificant in education; some educators have proffered that "community building must become the heart of any school improvement effort" (Sergiovanni, xi). But how does one measure "community"?

We are better at measuring the inputs of curriculum, instructional technique, and written policy than we are at quantifying social capital, parent-child behaviors, and the relationships among teachers and students. So the factors that can be measured and controlled receive the greatest attention. This may be one reason we are often disappointed in the learning outcomes we find at the other end of the equation. Community is a term we define rationally and illustrate by anecdote, not one to which we assign numbers. But perhaps we can make crude estimations of community in order to guide us in building it. One way to measure school community is to examine its components. Do its members share certain values about education? Do they associate with one another in ways that contribute to social capital? Is the curriculum of the home strong among a high percentage of its families?

This study began as an attempt to establish a baseline to evaluate a project whose purpose is to "build school community." The project, employing the Alliance for Achievement model, is sponsored by the Laboratory for Student Success, a federal education laboratory serving the mid-Atlantic region. The three premises of this undertaking are:

- School community includes the shared values of its members and the ways its members interact to enhance those values.
- The essential values of a school community are rooted in the desired developmental goals for its students, both academic and social.
- Families are powerful contributors to children's success in school and must be considered as part of the school's community.

PURPOSE

A School Community Survey was administered to parents and teachers in seven demonstration schools, and the principals of these schools completed a Needs Assessment. The survey data were analyzed and compiled into a School Community Index for each school. All seven schools were in the same district; six were K-5 buildings and the seventh was a 6-9 middle school. The reasons for analyzing data gathered from parents, teachers, and school principals were threefold: to provide each school a **data-based way to proceed,** information for building a stronger school community and for assessing its progress, to establish **a baseline for evaluation** of a project of the Laboratory for Student Success, and to begin the compilation of a data base that will eventually yield normative standards that

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will serve as indicators for schools in such previously subjective areas of school improvement as parental involvement, the curriculum of the home, and the strength and focus of a school community.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 168 teachers and 945 parents completed the surveys, and all seven principals completed the Needs Assessments. These numbers represented 60% of all teachers in the seven schools (82% in K-5 schools) and the parents of 28% of all students enrolled in the schools (34% in K-5 schools). Ninety-one percent of the parents completing the survey were females. The ethnicity of parents was: 83% white, non-Hispanic; 14% black, non-Hispanic; 0.7% Asian, and 0.4% Hispanic. Eighty-two percent of the parents were married at the time they completed the survey. Similar data were not collected for teachers.

METHOD

Parent surveys were distributed by classroom teachers to the youngest child in each family in each school. Instructions on the survey asked the parents to answer the questions for each child in the school and to ask one of their children to return the completed survey to the school within two days. Teacher surveys were distributed to teachers by the principal with instructions to complete the survey and return it to the office within two days. All surveys were completed anonymously. The surveys were administered during the third week of May.

The Needs Assessment completed by the principal consisted of six parts:

- General information about the school, such as grade levels served, number of students, and number of teachers.
- Opportunities for parental involvement, a checklist of 27 school-wide and classroom-specific ways the school offers parents an opportunity for involvement, ranging from open houses to service on governing committees.
- A rank ordering of the principal's priorities for seven categories of parental involvement.
- A checklist of parent education topics that might be appropriate and helpful to the school.
- A checklist of teacher in-service topics that might be appropriate and helpful to the school.
- Questions about the school's parent or parent-teacher organization, including its two central purposes, the number of meetings held, and the average attendance.

The School Community Survey administered to parents included three parts:

- **Parental Involvement,** including such variables as number of parent organization meetings attended, participation on school committees, participation in parent-teacher conferences, etc.
- **Curriculum of the Home,** including sets of questions about: a) home study habits, b) home reading habits, c) school-related parent-child interaction, d) televiewing, and e) enrichment activities.
- **Perceptions of Parents,** a set of 65 Likert-scale items (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Agree) addressing nine factors: a) the role of parents, b) the role of students, c) studying and homework, d) reading, e) character development, f) academic development, g) school/home communication, h) common experience/school climate, and i) association of school community members.

The School Community Survey administered to teachers included only a **Perceptions of Teachers** set of 65 Likert-scale items matching those asked parents except that the "role of parents" set was replaced by a "role of teachers" set addressing similar topics.

The data were analyzed separately for each school, again for all schools combined, and again for the six K-5 buildings combined. Because the enrollment of the middle school was so large (1,900) in comparison to the other schools, and because the six K-5 buildings offered an opportunity for comparison of schools of the same type, the analysis of the six K-5 buildings seemed useful.

The report prepared for each school included 36 pages of charts and quantitative presentation of data and a 13 page Threshold Analysis that guides the school community council (SCC) through the data, culminating in a listing of strengths, areas for improvement, and an action plan. Implementation staff from the Laboratory for Student Success assisted the SCCs in interpreting the data and forming action plans.

RESULTS

From this first, snap-shot view of seven schools in a single district, some interesting observations can be drawn. These observations are primarily descriptive, as the data provides a baseline for statistical comparison with similar data gathered in three years, after implementation of the Alliance for Achievement model. Some comparisons can be made, however, by looking at differences between groups (parents and teachers) and between schools.

Parental Involvement

Aggregating the data from all schools, the survey results reveal that a **large number of parents attend the annual open house (86%) and parent/teacher conferences (76%).** This high level of participation makes it important for schools to use these two points of contact to the greatest advantage.

About **one-third of parents report involvement in one or more of the other areas** listed in the survey: attendance at two or more parent organization meetings, service on a school committee, assistance in a classroom, participation in parent education. These levels are fairly consistent from school to school. Each school must consider the gains to be made from increased levels of participation in these activities.

The level of parental involvement drops dramatically in the middle school. This is probably a function of the school's size (1,900 students), its distance from students' residences, and the tendency of parents to discontinue their attachment to schools as their children grow older. But the district must pay some price in this detachment of parents, especially at grade levels that are traditionally a part of elementary schools rather than high schools.

Curriculum of the Home

Studying at Home

After kindergarten, parents report that **between half and two-thirds of students study at home four or more days per week,** depending upon the grade-level and school. But the percent that meets a threshold standard for the amount of time they study at home on a typical day (roughly 10 minutes per grade level) declines each time the standard is raised, indicating that **students are not gradually increasing the amount of time they study at home as they progress through the grades.**

The percent of students described by their parents as "studies on own initiative" increases gradually from kindergarten through fifth grade, then drops in the sixth grade before continuing its gradual increase in grades seven, eight, and nine. This drop at the sixth grade may be symptomatic of students' difficulty in adjusting to the middle school environment. **Overall, about one-third of students study on their own initiative.**

Looking at individual school results shows great variation in the number of days children study at home and the amount of time they spend studying. For example, while 78% of second graders in one school study at home four or more days per week, only 15% of second graders in another school spend an equal number of days studying. Likewise, 71% of the fifth graders in one school spend 46 or more minutes studying on a typical day, while only 25% of fifth graders in another school meet this standard. **Overall, about half of students meet the threshold standards for studying at home**—ten minutes per grade level per day, four days per week.

Reading

The percent of students who regularly read at home for pleasure is very consistent from grade to grade and from school to school. It appears that about **one-third of students demonstrate regular habits of reading at home (5 days or more per week, 30 minutes per day)**. Two thirds of students read at home for both pleasure and for school assignments, but this level hits a high of 84% in second grade and drops steadily to 52% in ninth grade.

Parent-Child Interactions

Two-thirds of parents talk with their children about school work on five or more days each week, and a slightly higher number talk with their children about school experiences. **One-half of parents talk with their children about the children's reading** three or more days per week, and slightly fewer talk with their children about their own reading two or more days per week. These levels of interaction appear to be fairly consistent from school to school, with some fall-off in the middle school.

Televiewing

With numbers that are remarkably consistent from school to school, including the middle school, about **one-third of children watch TV fewer than 5 days per week, and 60% watch TV for 1 ½ hours or less** on a typical day.

Enrichment Activities

Half of parents have taken their children to the library in the past month, a level with almost no variation from school to school. With slightly more variation, including a drop in the middle school, about **60% of parents have taken their children to a museum,** aquarium, arboretum, zoo, planetarium, or botanical garden in the past six months.

The several measures of the curriculum of the home find a floor of compliance at about one-third of homes and a ceiling of two-thirds. In summary, then, we find that roughly half of children benefit from a solid curriculum of the home, as reported by their own parents. These levels vary from school to school. As schools implement the Alliance for Achievement model, time series analysis will determine the extent to which curriculum-of-the-home factors can be influenced.

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Perceptions of Parents and Teachers

Differences Between Schools

There are several ways to analyze the results of the 65-statement, Likert scale, Perceptions Index administered to parents and teachers. One way is through school-to-school comparisons. This analysis is important if we are to make the case that school community is something that resides at different degrees in different schools and can, thus, be increased through intervention. If we can quantify differences between schools, then we should be able to measure changes over time in the same school.

The Perceptions Index included clusters of 6 to 10 items for each of nine factors. The factors were: 1) Role of Parents (or Teachers), 2) Role of Student, 3) Studying /Homework, 4) Reading, 5) Character Development, 6) Academic Development, 7) School-Home Communication, 8) Common Experience/ School Climate, and 9) Association of School Community Members. An ANOVA statistic was used to determine if significant between-school differences occurred on each of these nine factors, for parents and for teachers, and for a grand mean (the mean of the nine factor means). For the parent scale, eight of the nine factors, and the grand mean, demonstrated statistically significant between-school differences ($p=.05$). The Studying/Homework factor was significant at the level of $p=.08$. For the teacher scale, all nine factors and the grand mean demonstrated statistically significant between school differences ($p=.05$).

When the middle school was eliminated from the between-school comparison, thus focusing on six K-5 schools in the same district, the parent scale produced statistically significant difference on the grand mean, association, common experience/school climate, studying/homework, and role of parents factors. Also with the middle school eliminated, the teacher scale showed statistically significant between-school differences on the grand mean, common experience/school climate, character development, reading, role of teachers, and role of students factors.

Table 1: Statistically Significant Between-School Differences by Factor
XXXXX = Significant at p=.05

	K-5 Schools Only		All Schools	
	Parents	Teachers	Parents	Teachers
Grand Mean (Mean of 9 Factor Mean)	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx
Academic Development			xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx
Association	xxxxxxxx		xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx
Common Experience/School Climate	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx
Character Development		xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx
School-Home Communication			xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx
Studying/Homework	xxxxxxxx			xxxxxxxx
Reading		xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx
Roles of Parents/Teachers	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx
Role of Students		xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx

Differences Between Parents and Teachers

A test was made to determine if teachers and parents differed statistically in their perceptions. The mean of all nine factors for parents was nearly identical to that of teachers, thus yielding no significant difference. But five of the nine factor means demonstrated statistically significant difference between parents and teachers. The factors revealing significant difference between parents and teachers were: Academic development, common experience/school climate, studying/homework, roles of parents/teachers, and role of student. For academic development, studying/homework, and role of student, the ratings given by teachers were significantly higher than those given by parents, indicating a more favorable perception. For common experience/school climate and roles of parents/ teachers, the ratings of parents were significantly higher than those of teachers. These differences offset each other, thus resulting in the nearly identical grand means for all nine factors.

Looking at the parent-teacher differences for each school gives a very different picture. Table 2 reveals where the differences lie. In fact, the results for school 7 (the middle school) were strikingly dissimilar to the other schools, all of which are K-5 buildings. Because school 7 had the largest number of respondents, the higher ratings by parents in school 7 balanced the higher ratings by teachers in the other schools to produce the over-all balance in the grand mean. That a difference in school type would reveal itself is to be expected. Certainly a measure of school community factors in a building of 1,900 6th through 8th graders would produce different results than a measure of K-5 schools with 260 to 800 students.

Table 2: Significant difference between parents and teachers
(T where teachers rated significantly higher; P where parents rated significantly higher)

	School						
Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Academic Development	T		T	T		T	
Association of Members			T			T	P
Common Experience/School Climate				T	T		P
Character Development				T	T		P
School-Home Communication							
Studying/Homework	T			T		T	P
Reading			P				
Roles of Parents/Teachers				T	T		P
Role of Students		T	T	T			
Grand Mean				T			P

Agreement with Specific Items

The percent of respondents who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with a particular statement was computed for each school. These school-level percentages were then averaged so that each school was given equal weight, regardless of the number of respondents. From the 65 items on the survey, the five with the highest percentage of agreement (for parents and teachers), the five with the lowest percentage of agreement (parents and teachers), and the five with the greatest difference in level of agreement between parents and teachers are highlighted here. All statements follow the prefix: "At this school..."

Table 3: Highest agreement (percent of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed)
(asterisked items appear on both lists—parents and teachers)

Parents		Teachers	
Students are expected to behave properly.	90	If a parent has a concern about a student, the teachers will listen and help.	98
*Students are expected to complete their homework on time.	92	*Students are expected to complete their homework on time.	95
The school building is kept clean.	90	Most teachers are models of respectful and responsible behavior.	94
Reading is very important at the school.	88	Students are encouraged to do their best work.	93
Parents are expected to see that their children complete their homework.	84	Students are treated with respect.	93

Table 4: Lowest agreement (Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree)
(asterisked items appear on both lists—parents and teachers)

Parents		Teachers	
*Teachers visit the homes of the students.	10	*Teachers visit the homes of the students.	2
Students are taught how to study..	31	*Most parents know most of the other parents in their children's classes.	27
*Homework practices are fairly consistent from teacher to teacher..	33	Parents encourage their children to read for pleasure.	33
*Most parents know most of the other parents in their children's classes..	36	*Homework practices are fairly consistent from teacher to teacher.	35
Parents are included in making important decisions at the school.	41	Parents let teachers know when their children have benefited from their teaching.	37

Table 5: Greatest difference (Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree)

	Parents	Teachers
Parents encourage their children to read for pleasure.	73	33
Students who graduate from this school are well-prepared for the challenges the next school will present them.	46	79
All students are helped to learn the most they can.	55	88
Teachers are generally supportive of each other.	60	92
Teachers teach students how to read to master materials.	57	86

Discussion of Perceptions

Studying, reading, and good behavior are topics upon which a school community might place strong value, particularly as these topics fall into the area of overlapping responsibility between home and school. Teachers assign homework and teach students how to study, but parents monitor homework and see that their children complete it. Teachers teach their students to read, but parents must encourage the habit of reading at home. Good behavior must be consistently modeled and reinforced at home and at school. So what do parents and teachers think about studying, reading, and behavior?

Studying/Homework

A high percentage of parents believes that students are expected to complete their homework on time (92%) and that parents are expected to see that their children complete their homework (84%). But low percentages of parents (33%) believe that homework practices are consistent from teacher to teacher. Only 31% of parents and 57% of teachers think students are taught how to study. Interestingly, 64% of teachers and 42% of parents think their school has a homework policy. Either a school has a homework

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policy, or it does not. So one might expect that agreement with this statement would be either 100% or 0% for a specific school. Such is not the case, as Table 6 illustrates.

Table 6: Percent of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "The school has a homework policy."

School	Parents	Teachers
1	37	88
2	38	67
3	40	68
4	37	65
5	41	67
6	44	82
7	61	26
Mean	42.57	66.14

Reading

Reading is very important at their school, according to 88% of parents and 93% of teachers. But only 57% of parents think that teachers teach students how to read to master material, and only 33% of teachers think parents encourage their children to read at home for pleasure. These findings might indicate some uncertainty on the part of parents and teachers that their counterparts are meeting their obligations in regards to a widely-acknowledged educational value—reading.

Behavior

A cluster of items tap into perceptions of parents and teachers about an area around which values are usually consolidated, that of respectful and responsible behavior. Table 7 shows the results:

Table 7: Percent of parents and teachers who agree or strongly agree with statements about behavior

At this school...	Parents	Teachers
Students are expected to behave properly.	92	83
Students are treated with respect.	71	93
Students are taught to behave respectfully and responsibly.	76	82
Discipline is consistent and fair.	52	55
Students treat each other with respect.	52	53
Students treat teachers with respect.	63	62
Most teachers are models of respectful and responsible behavior.	77	94
Most parents are models of respectful and responsible behavior.	53	47

It appears that the value is strong: Students are expected to behave properly. But barely half of parents and teachers think that students treat each other with respect, and a similar percentage thinks discipline is consistent and fair. Neither parents nor teachers are particularly sanguine about the performance of most parents in modeling respectful and responsible behavior.

Social Capital

The opportunity to form social capital presents itself when members of a school community are in association with one another and when they communicate with one another. Several items on the survey address perceptions about association and communication. The following set of items may provide a glimpse into the levels of opportunity for social capital in these school communities, as perceived by parents and teachers.

Table 8: Percent of parents and teachers who agree or strongly agree with statements about association and communication

At this school...	Parents	Teachers
Teachers contact parents to discuss their children's academic progress.	61	86
Parents contact teachers to discuss their children's academic progress.	71	49
If a teacher has a concern about a student, the parents will listen and help	77	53
If a parent has a concern about a student, the parents will listen and help.	77	98
Teachers visit the homes of the students.	10	2
Teachers talk with parents on the telephone.	76	92
Teachers send notes to parents.	74	88
Teachers let parents know good things their children have done.	68	83
Parents let teachers know when their children have benefited from their teaching	60	37
Teachers at the school know each other well.	59	87
Teachers are generally supportive of each other.	60	92
Most parents know most of the other parents in their children's classes.	36	27
Most parents know their children's teachers.	74	64
Most teachers know their students parents.	60	59

CONCLUSIONS

The School Community Index is a very crude, first attempt at measuring aspects of school community. It nibbles at the definitional components of school community: shared educational values,

formation of social capital, the curriculum of the home. It probes the relationships among the constituents. From this rough beginning, the instrument can be improved and new lessons learned. As the School Community Index is utilized in more schools, and is administered in the same schools at different points in time, several questions will be asked and answered. From this inquiry will come a better understanding of the concept of school community and the efficacy with which we might measure its strength.

- To what extent do factors measured by the School Community Index reflect the demographic (SES) make-up of the student population?
- To what extent do factors measured by the School Community Index reflect institutional characteristics such as number of students, span of grade levels, distance from student residences, departmental organization, and per-pupil expenditures?
- To what extent do factors measured by the School Community Index reflect the policies and practices of the school?
- To what extent do factors measured by the School Community Index correlate with student learning outcomes, including achievement test scores (actual and gain from prior year), attendance, and disciplinary referrals.
- To what extent can changes in school policies and practices influence the factors measured by the School Community Index?
- What school policies and practices, if any, can be altered to effect positive change in factors measured by the School Community Index and, consequently, improve student learning outcomes, including achievement test scores (actual and gain from prior year), attendance, and disciplinary referral?

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The Laboratory for Student Success

The Laboratory for Student Success (LSS) is one of ten regional educational laboratories in the nation funded by the U.S. Department of Education to revitalize and reform educational practice in the service of children and youth.

The mission of the Laboratory for Student Success is to strengthen the capacity of the mid-Atlantic region to enact and sustain lasting systemic educational reform through collaborative programs of applied research and development and services to the field. In particular, the LSS facilitates the transformation of research-based knowledge into useful tools that can be readily integrated into the educational reform process both regionally and nationally. To ensure a high degree of effectiveness, the work of the LSS is continuously refined based on feedback from the field on what is working and what is needed in improving educational practice.

The ultimate goal of the LSS is the formation of a connected system of schools, parents, community agencies, professional organizations, and institutions of higher education that serves the needs of all students and is linked with a high-tech national system for information exchange. In particular, the aim is to bring researchers and research-based knowledge into synergistic coordination with other efforts for educational improvement led by field-based professionals.

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